

## A Death Sonnet for Custer.

BY WALT WHITMAN.

I.  
Far from Montana's canyons,  
Lands of the wild ravine, the dusky Sioux, the  
lonesome stretch, the silence,  
Haply, to-day, a mournful wail—haply a trumpet-note for heroes.

II.  
The battle-bulletin,  
The Indian ambuscade—the slaughter and environment,  
The cavalry companies fighting to the last—in  
sternest, coolest heroism,  
The fall of Custer, and all his officers and men.

III.  
Continuous yet the old, old legend of our race,  
The loftiest of life upheld by death!  
The ancient banner perfectly maintained!  
(O lesson opportune—O how I welcome thee!)  
As, sitting in dark days,  
Lone, sulky, through the time's thick murk looking  
in vain for light, for hope,  
From unsuspected parts, a fierce and momentary  
proof,  
(The sun there at the center, though concealed,  
Electric life forever at the center.)  
Breaks forth, a lightning flash.

IV.  
Thou of the sunny, flowing hair, in battle,  
I crouched low, with erect head, pressing ever in  
front, bearing a bright sword in thy hand,  
Now ending well the splendid fever of thy deeds,  
(I bring no dirge for it or thee—I bring a glad,  
triumphal sonnet.)  
There in the far northwest, in struggle, charge,  
and sally—smile,  
Desperate and glorious—aye, in defeat most desperate,  
most glorious,  
After the many battles, in which, never yielding  
up a gun or a color,  
Leaving behind thee a memory sweet to soldiers,  
Thou yieldest up thyself.

—New York Tribune.

## CHARYBDIS'S HUSBANDS.

It was during that exquisite half hour which separates sunset and twilight that the slowly moving Charleston train intermitted its deliberate progress to set us down at the valley station. We were the only passengers to alight, so the roomy wagon which stood waiting could be for none other than us. And stowing ourselves and our baggage therein, we started on the road to Box Hill—"road," so called by courtesy, but differing widely from the legalized institution known under that name at the North. It was a path, or rather track, of the roughest description through the pine woods, laid out, as it were, by some wandering cow, winding and turning as she turned here to crop a bush and there to avoid a fallen trunk, set thickly with roots and stumps, and swept in places with the lower branches of the trees. Luckily, our vehicle had no top to interfere with these, and there was this consolation for our jolts and bumps, that each obstruction dislodged by our wheels improved the "road" for the next traveler.

High over our heads rose the forest giants, their soft feathery boughs meeting to clasp in spaces of deep blue sky. The dust below was brown with fallen needles, which sent a fragrance up as we passed. We were conscious of a sound in the air like waves beating on a shore, far off at times, then drawing nearer, and surging and roaring, till we looked, half expecting to see the tide pour in and whelm the world in sea. This strange sound was the tale of the flood, which the pines have murmured ever since the ark rested on Mount Ararat, and the waters which covered them were withdrawn. The violets, trailing arbutus, and wind-flowers growing at their feet turned up fresh fair faces, and seemed listening to the sound, half fearful, half fascinated. We listened too, till gradually the spirit of dreams took possession of us, and we pursued our way in happy silence.

Two miles, three, four, and we came upon a house set close to the forest edge—a little brown house embowered in vines trailing over wide verandas, and standing in a yard which reminded us of a florist's box, so full was it, to the very edge, of roses, creamy, red, yellow, white, and flame-colored. This was Box Hill; for there at the gate appeared dear Kate Carroll and her husband, ready to give us welcome. Behind them stood an old colored woman, erect and dignified, with a wonderful poise to her unbowed head, and an expression of self-satisfied repose. In the midst of our first kisses my eyes wandered toward this apparition, whereon she gave a singular jump and sidelong frisk, smiling so as to reveal two rows of gleaming teeth, and exclaimed:

"Missy's the very picture of Mars Benjamin what was here a piece back. Howdy, missy?"

"Who is that?" I whispered as we walked up to the house.

"That," answered Kate, "is Charybdis, Baby's old nurse, you know." Her eyes took on that luminous and faraway look which I have noticed in other mothers' eyes when they spoke of children that are dead; and for a moment there was silence.

Such a droll, pretty little house as it was, draped outside with La Marque roses, which topped the very chimneys, and beat on each window pane with odd little pleading taps which sounded like "take, take, take," or, as the more

romantic of us thought, like iteration of the name of the roses' fair mistress, "Kate, Kate, Kate." Take, take, we did, and that with unsparing hands, and all day long. There never seemed fewer buds or blossoms on the vine for all our gathering. It is impossible to exhaust the riches of a Carolina rose tree. Inside, the house was coiled and walled with yellow pine, dark and glossy with age. There were pictures, bronzes, bits of old carved furniture, flowers everywhere. In one corner stood a tall Dutch clock, which chimed each hour some queer tinkling tune, exchanged on Sundays for the 104th Psalm. The whole was lit and made splendid by a fire of light wood—such a fire as is the joy of the "piny region," and impossible to Northern grates, charm they never so wisely with Centennial fenders and brass adirons. Only in the South is light wood obtainable, and it is worth going thither to experience its glorious resinous flame.

Day after day, week after week, drifted past us at Box Hill. We grew fond of the quiet, eventless life, of the uninterrupted scent of roses and rustle of pines, the peace and still freshness and repose. One of our chief amusements was old Charybdis. She, on her part, pleased at our preference, never missed a chance or excuse for a chat. Her favorite theme was "little missy," the baby she had tended so faithfully and so deeply mourned, and scarcely a day passed without some tale of the sweetness and intelligence of this lost darling. "I am afraid you would have spoiled her had she lived," H— said one day. Charybdis drew herself up. "Missis, I never spiles a child—never! I gives them all they wants and all their hearts desire. I never crosses them and spiles their disposition."

Her standard was perfection, and, like most of us, she kept it to measure others by. This principle applied conveniently to her dealings with her own race. She would rarely pay a colored person for dress-making or other work.

"No, I don't pay for such no-account sewing as that," I overheard her saying one day. "Besides, you kep' that dress three weeks, and I reckon you've wore it the worth of the making; and now you're so saucy about it, I'll never pay you nohow."

One of her most delightful traits was her use of language. She availed herself of the most difficult words with a joyous abandon; nothing irritated her so much as not being able to comprehend what was said. The governess, a German, was much out of her favor on that account.

"Them fowllins and mamsils needn't talk to me. I don't like broken languages," she would observe wrathfully. All tongues save English came under this comprehensive and contemptuous phrase, "broken languages." English never presented the slightest difficulty to her. I recollect her announcing the census taker as "the sensitive man," and on another occasion saying of a couple of gentlemen visitors, "There they goes, walking as if they owned the worl'! They walks like generals; and if they was generals, they wouldn't be common generals; they'd be briggerly-generals!"

I am sorry to add to this that our beloved Charybdis had failings—among them dishonesty, so common a fault with black servants that it is taken almost as a matter of course. Charybdis stole adroitly, and was seldom caught in the act. When she was, her explanations were always ready, though not always probable.

"I was a taking it into town to get it done up right clean. You know you is mighty partikeler to have things clean," she said, one day, when detected with the blacking-brush in her pocket. Kate's system on these occasions was always the same. As soon as any article was missed, she would tell Charybdis that, being inanimate, the thing could not have walked off by itself; consequently she, Charybdis, must have taken it. "Mislaid," was the euphemism employed. Sometimes this course was at once successful; at other times weeks would pass by while Charybdis, who was always taken lame while under suspicion, limped about the house, her face black with gloom, and looking like a brooding storm. Suddenly, the inward struggle coming to an end, she would decide to restore the treasure, and running up stairs with a light step and total absence of lameness, would produce it from some thrice-searched corner, with a giggle of triumph, and be happy and light-hearted as a forgiven child for days afterward. Occasionally the article would never return. In such cases the gloom would gradually lighten, but the joy was wanting.

We had been months at Box Hill—summer had given place to autumn, and autumn carried us almost to the Christmas tide—when one cool evening, at hair-brushing time, Charybdis came

into our bedroom carrying the huge back-log with which it was her nightly duty to replenish the fire. H— was at the toilet table, and I, from the chimney corner, was lazily studying the curious markings and grainings on the pine walls and ceiling—a study which afforded me never-failing delight. Here was a dragon, there a girl's face, as if the tree from which the plank came had photographed by some mysterious process the events and people which had passed within its ken during centuries of growth. I was weaving a Christmas story from the odd marks, thwarted vexatiously, from the fact that the dragon would look as if he was devouring the girl instead of being himself destroyed by the youthful hero in the corner, whose existence two eyes, a nose, and part of a beard seemed to shadow forth. Suddenly into the midst of fire-light and fancy came Charybdis, with her clattering log, and disturbed the progress of the tale.

All the time that she knelt, arranging her wood, she crooned to herself a nursery song:

"Coo, says a little bird,  
Coo, says he:  
If I was you  
And you was me,  
We'd all live together  
In the old pine tree.  
Coo, says he."

That was little missy's song," said she, looking up. "I most always put her to sleep with that."

"Had you children of your own, Charybdis?"

"Oh yes, missis; heaps."

"And what was your husband's name?"

"Well, missis, his name was Cato. You see, missis, I was born way down in E— County, and I grewed up wid Mars Arthur and Mars Pres and a lot more of those big mens. My old miss (she was Mars Butler's wife) was mighty rich. She had a heap of nice things, and she was mighty pertikeler about them pertikeler things. She taught us to courtesy when we was spoke to by white folks, and not to stick out our tongues, nor put our fingers in our ears, nor stand on one leg. My old miss told me befo' she died that I'd never have so happy a home agen, and sure nuff I never did. You's mighty kind to me here, but no one was ever so good to me as my ole miss."

"My father's mother was a white woman. She couldn't have been no lady! My grandfather was a black man. My mother was part Indian and part colored. She was a hard mother; she used to beat us good; she said she wasn't gwine to leave it to other people to do. Ef she caught us showin' bad manners befo' the white folk, she'd jess take two of us and knock our heads together till we was dead."

Dead, I should explain, is African for insensible.

"My people wa'n't no black people. My ole miss she couldn't abide black people. Them Ethiopians with yellow eyes, they is the color of Satan, and their hearts is as black as their faces."

"My father was coachman. He used to drive the Simpkinses and the Pickenses and the Calhouns about the State when they come to visit my marster. He was a kind father, and would let us sit up of nights after he come back from them long 'scursions, and he tell us what a heap the white folks thought of him, and how it 'peared like they loved him, they was so kind; and then he'd tell how this one give him a gold piece, and that one a bottle of whisky, and 'bout the no-account po' white folks that he saw, and say how powerful glad we mus' be that we wa'n't born po' white folks. Sometimes he'd give us a sip of the whisky, but mos'ly he drank it up before he come home. He was very strict with mother and the chil'en, and said he didn't want us to be fond of whisky. You see, we was all gurl chil'en, and whisky ain't good for little gurls. When my ole miss died, I was put to work in the field, and learned to plow, hoe, split rails, and gather in the crop. I was a big strong gurl, and could do as much work as a man."

"When my young miss got married, she took me for her maid. That put me in the notion of getting married too, and so I done got married to Cato Jones. But while I was off with Miss Caroline at the Springs they sent him away to another worl'."

"What do you mean?" cried H—, horror-stricken.

"Jess that, missis; they sold him to go to New Orleans, 'way off to another worl'. Then I got married agen, but I've done forgot the name of that one; he was powerful of no account, and I jess ran him off with a club."

"I didn't marry agen for a right smart time, I 'peared to have such bad luck with husbands. I got mars to hire me to another gentleman, and I cooked and washed for eight persons. I kep' my kitchen so clean that they said any

one might eat off the do'. I worked right along there till 'manicipation. But after 'manicipation, 'peared as ef I mus' go off somewhere away from my ole home, and so I come down here with all the chil'en. You see, I wanted to feel free, and 'peared like I couldn't feel free where ole mars was."

"Jess after I got here I met up with Doctor Prince General Jordan, an' we married. He was good to me. He thought such a heap of me that he never let me work, and I sat still so much that I grew right fat. But that happy life of ours didn't last mo' than six months."

"Why not?" asked I.

"There was an ole Ethiopium woman, you see, who had wanted him to marry her; but Doctor Prince General Jordan didn't care for her so much as nothin'. And that bad ole black woman gave him a cake with something in it, and he died."

"Poisoned?"

"Pizened? Yes, sure enough, pizened."

I learned afterward that the negroes rarely will allow that any one dies in a natural way. Poison, witchcraft, and the evil eye finish most of them.

"I never have took off mourning for Jordan," was her next remark. We glared. There she sat at that moment in a blue dress, red turban, yellow apron, and garnet earrings! The incongruity seemed to strike her, for she added, hastily, "But I wear what people gives me."

"Then you never married again, Charybdis?"

"Oh yes, miss; my chil'en got me to marry Cupid Home."

"What! Not Cupid, that bad fellow that tried to kill a policeman last week?"

"Yes, miss, that's the nigger. You see, the chil'en made a great 'miration over him, and tole me how he'd do for me and not let me work, and then he had such a lovin' name!"

"Brother Peppers, the Methodist minister, he married us. I wore a purple calico dress—jess as ole one I had. I've always been powerful glad that I never bought nothin' new for that weddin'."

"After we was married we had some ham (I bought the ham) and some taters and coffee, and every one 'lowed it was a good nuff weddin' for a widow to give."

"We lived in that house near the depot, but I didn't stay with him long. Why, miss? Three days after we was married he got after me with that ham bone, and he liked to 'a killed me. I jumped out of the window at last, and run off to a neighbor's, and nex' morning I went to town and didn't come back for three months."

"When I got back, Brother Peppers an' the elders of the church come to me and 'lowed I mus' go back and live with Cupid. They tole me the Bible said I was to go back, but I tole 'em that the Bible didn't say I was to let myself be killed, and if it did, I wan't gwine to; I had done leff him, and I was a gwine to stay leff."

With this, Charybdis got up from the hearth and moved toward the door.

"Bat," said H—, "I thought some one said your husband was that old Charley who came last week after the mules. When did you marry him, Charybdis?"

Charybdis was in the act of vanishing, but she re-opened the door to say, with a chuckle,

"Oh, I jess got him accidental like. Good night, miss."—Harper's Bazar.

## A Child's Adventure with a Mucilage Bottle.

Six months ago a child of S. S. Prouty, aged two and a half years, swallowed a metal top of a small mucilage bottle. The child was immediately examined by a physician, and after a thorough inspection the doctor gave it as his opinion that the metal had gone into the child's stomach, and that it would eventually be dissolved by the gastric juice and pass off. On the same day the child gave symptoms of catarrhal affection, and the physician prescribed for it a treatment for catarrh, which has been administered constantly ever since, but without apparent benefit. Mucous of an offensive odor ran from the nose, and the breath was intolerable. In other respects the child seemed to be well. Yesterday afternoon it was seized with a vomiting spell, and during the retching the top dropped out, as sound as it was the day it was swallowed. The doctor is now of the opinion that the metal obtained a lodgment behind the palate, where it remained until vomited up. It was filled with and enveloped by the same offensive mucous matter, when found, as had been discharged from the nose. The catarrhal symptoms are now rapidly disappearing.—Topeka Commonwealth.

## DOMESTIC ECONOMY.

HOW TO DYE SHIRTS.—A lady gives the following in the Ohio Farmer: To 3 tablespoonfuls of common starch, well boiled in 1 quart of water, add a lump of lard the size of a pea, a tablespoonful of loaf-sugar, and a little salt. Let it cool until you can use it without burning your hands. When the clothes are thoroughly dry, dampen your shirts in a thin, cold starch, roll them up and let them lay one hour before ironing. When ready to iron have a bowl of clean, cold water at hand, dip a clean handkerchief into it and wring it out dry; then stretch the shirt over a shirt-board, and with the dampened handkerchief wipe off every particle of starch that appears on the surface, taking care always to wipe downward. Be careful not to have the iron too hot. The more pressure you use on the starched surface the finer polish you will get. I have done up shirts in this way for several years, and know that it will produce a polish equal to any laundry work. I forgot to mention in its proper place that you should never boil the starch until the clothes are ready to hang up to dry. No shirt can be done up nicely without a shirt-board. The one I have is 2 feet long and 1 foot wide—an inch board planed smooth, and covered on one side with 6 thicknesses of flannel. The first 5 thicknesses are stretched over tightly, and tacked securely on to the edge of the board, all around; the white flannel, outside, is stitched to the edge of the others, so that it can be removed for washing whenever necessary. Old blankets or shawls that have done their duty as such can be well utilized for this purpose.

CURRENT WINE.—The Germantown Telegraph says: For several years we made a 10-gallon keg of currant wine, of as good quality as any we have tasted, and is pronounced excellent by those who have had an opportunity to judge. The mode of manufacture is simple, and can easily be followed by any family having the currants, and the disposition to make the wine. The currants should be fully ripe when picked; put them into a large tub, in which they should remain a day or two, then crush with the hands, unless you have a small patent wine press, in which they should not be pressed too much, or the stems will be bruised and impart a disagreeable taste to the juice. If the hands are used, put the crushed fruit, after the juice has been poured off, in a cloth or sack and press out the remaining juice. Put the juice back into the tub after cleansing it, where it should remain about three days, until the first stage of fermentation is over, and remove once or twice a day the scum copiously arising to the top. Then put the juice in a vessel—a demijohn, keg or barrel—any size to suit the quantity made, and to each quart of juice add three pounds of the best yellow sugar and soft water sufficient to make a gallon. Thus, 10 quarts of juice and 30 pounds of sugar will give you 10 gallons of wine, and so on in that proportion. Those who do not like sweet wine can reduce the quantity of sugar to 2½ pounds per gallon. The vessel must be full and the bung or stopper left off until fermentation ceases, which will be in 12 or 15 days. Meanwhile the cask must be filled up daily with currant juice left over, as fermentation throws out impure matter. When fermentation ceases rack the wine off carefully, either from the spigot or by a siphon, and keep it running all the time. Cleanse the cask thoroughly with boiling water, then return the wine, bung up tightly, and let stand 4 or 5 months, when it will be fit to drink and can be bottled if desired. All the vessels, casks, etc., should be perfectly sweet, and the whole operation should be done with an eye to cleanliness. In such event every drop of brandy or other spirituous liquor added will detract from the flavor of the wine, and will not in the least degree increase its keeping qualities. Currant wine made in this way will keep for an age. We have some made in 1856 which is really an excellent article.

EDWARD COE, editor of the Register, Whitewater, Wis., has recently inherited a fortune of \$63,000, and he proposes to divide up \$30,000 in sums of \$500, and seek out the deserving poor, meritorious widowed ladies, and indigent orphans, and upon satisfactory evidence that they are proper objects of charity, donate to them the sum mentioned.

PERHAPS the most remarkable of the contributions of Hawaii to the Centennial Exhibition are a couple of volumes of "Bowditch's Navigator," in the Japanese language. The work is one of twenty copies, which were all made by hand, with incredible neatness and skill, in Japan, twenty years ago.